

Food Policy Council Minutes

2/18/2015

Member in attendance: Fred Kaskowitz, Christine Stafstrom, Esperina Baptiste Stubblefield, Kristin DuBay-Horton, Maggie Reynolds, Steven Farley, Raquel-Rivera Pablo, Jonathan James, and Marie Desances.

The meeting started at 6:15 and everyone introduced themselves.

FPC reviewed the past meeting minutes. Maggie moved to approve them, and Christine seconded it. The group approved unanimously.

Healthy Corner Stores

Marie spoke about setting up a meeting with OPED and contractors to facilitate the remodeling of the Healthy Corner Stores. One of the stores, Torres Variety, has a new owner. The new owner signed a contract to become part of the Healthy Corner Stores Initiative. Marie suggest that store owners take down excess signage to improve store appearance.

Gardening and Farming

The Gardening and Farming committee is planning an event in April 2015 for National Public Health week. The event will be dedicated to unveiling the community garden sign. Christina spoke about community garden funding being available, however due to lack of communications the contract was null and void. Nonetheless, the committee is planning on reapplying and submitting the application within a week. The goals of the Gardening and Farming committee are:

- To Put up signage on all community gardens with how to participate, who to contact
- Spring-summer community outreach + education effort through cross-promotion
- To engage interested students in the vocational pathway through gardening and farming work
- To establish a community buying group to get inputs such as soil, mulch, seeds for a better price.
- To launch website showing where community gardens are and how to sign up for a plot or to volunteer
- To source/identify permanent funding for community gardens to be financially self-sustainable
- To create an Urban Gardening Resource Toolkit for Bridgeport

In addition, a Twitter account will be created for the FPC that the Gardening committee can use to raise social awareness by providing gardening tips. This account can be used for any FPC activities.

Farmers Markets - Steven spoke about the difficulties of getting funds to run the farmers market. Since food access was not a priority for the block grant, this unfortunately creates a barrier. Nonetheless, the Farmers Markets will continue promoting the use of SNAP.

Food Waste - No update, Kristin said Doran is sick, and they will meet next week.

Food System Summit - Maura O'Malley, Michelle McCabe, Maggie, Madison, and Raquel all met to discuss strategies for improving healthy food access for children within the city of Bridgeport. In the meeting, Maura gave a demonstration of the software she uses to track the nutritional quality of school meals and report back to USDA. The group discussed some strategies for improving the quality of school meals while maintaining compliance with federal regulations for school food, including: focusing on providing fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks outside of meal times; direct outreach and education for teachers and janitors; bringing in salad bars; finding funding for packaging equipment to make healthier food easier to distribute and clean up after; and replacing juice with whole fruit during breakfast. The Food Policy Council discussed focusing the Summit on the importance of breakfast and specifically how these strategies for collaboration with the Nutrition Center could be presented during the event.

Kristin met with Get Healthy CT and is planning on putting together educational documents to help educate children about the benefit of eating healthier. In addition to passing out the book "Eat Well on \$4/day Good and Cheap" written by Leanne Brown.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm. Fred made the motion, Esperina seconded and it was unanimous.